

GRACIE.

CHAPTER III.
(Concluded.)

Amelia Wyvern on "varnishing day" was sight for the gods to see. Stepping out, daintily attired, her bright face positively brilliant with excitement, she carried in her well-gloved hands the neatest of color-boxes, and newest of paint-brushes, as well as a tenderly-treasured printed document which invited her to come and view her own picture in the — Street Exhibition.

She crossed the threshold of that sacred spot somewhat nervously, afraid of being stopped or turned away, yet trying to appear self-possessed as though the best part of her twenty years had consisted of "varnishing days."

When she entered the gallery, which was not a large one, she looked eagerly round, but did not see any one there except the bandit. There were about a dozen pictures in the room, women as well as men, strutting or standing about, mostly in knots of two and three, and all with a more or less characteristic aspect, a couple of kindly workers were bringing long ladder for an unfortunate youth who wanted to touch up his picture, hung as it was so high that nothing of it could be seen, but the lower portion of a pair of highly-glazed Wellington boots. Following the direction of the artist's upturned nose, Amelia suddenly discerned her picture, hung on the top line, where it seemed so small as to resemble a richly-colored postage stamp.

Alas, poor bandit! Alas, poor Amelia! The bandit frowned and glared in punity at from his attitude, whilst Amelia went thoughtfully faint before his pocket to find her handkerchief. The painter of the picture, however, either a lad or a girl, and looking round somewhat sorrowful, he encountered the pretty sorrowful face be-neath him.

"Is your picture up here?" he asked kindly.

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" stammered Amelia. "Alas?" The words of sympathy made the tremulous tears overflow.

"I have thought it," said the painter gently, "anyhow, you're a good girl." And the bandit, at a little distance, the picture looks uncommonly well, doesn't it?"

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"It's a picture of Amy and Douglas."

But she whispered the words so softly it is doubtful whether Mrs. Wyvern heard them; at all events, she kept silence.

It happened that just after this conversation Amelia received a letter containing the announcement of the sale of her first picture. Her joy was unbounded; she jumped up, and danced, and ran about the room, a child in high delight. Mr. McHugh was very much pleased, and looked in for a moment only, of course, sat open-mouthed and amazed, watching his lady-love's evident symptoms of lunacy, and wondering whether any effort on his part might prevail in calling forth such expression of joy from her.

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